

FREE ISSUE

NEWS THE NEXT GTA

PREVIEW CALL OF DUTY: MODERN WARFARE II



ISSUE 87 SEPTEMBER 2022

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A PLAGUE TALE
REQUIEM





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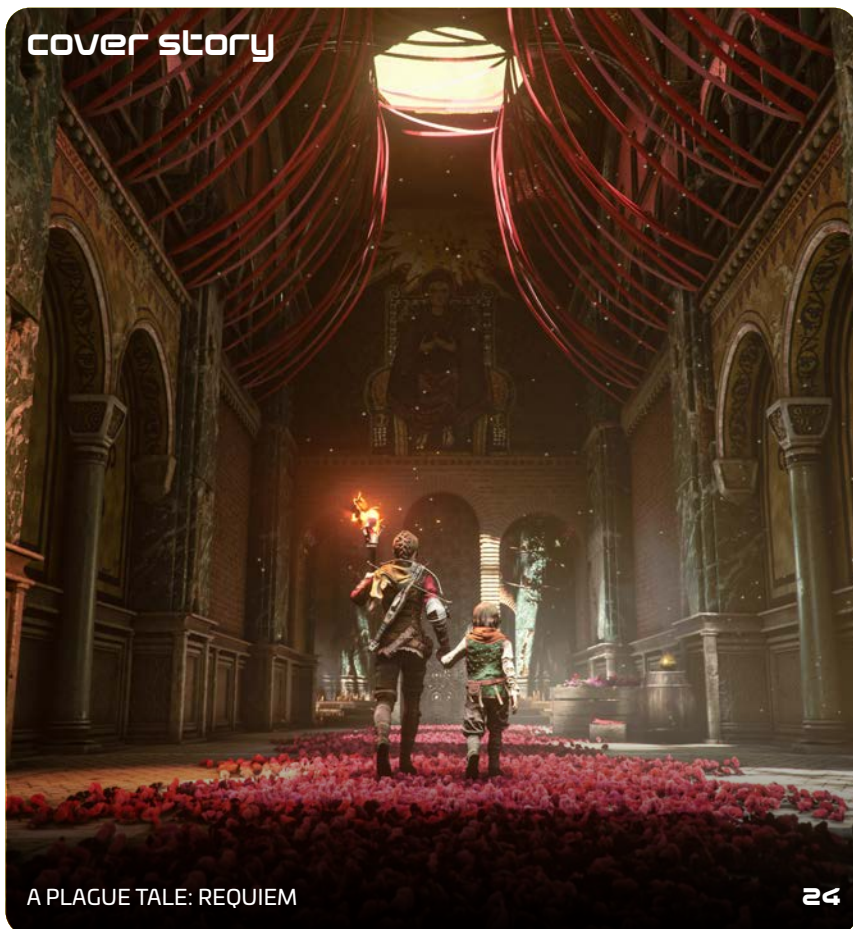


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Nintendo Switch Lite plays all games that support handheld mode.
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Nintendo



welcome

FROM THE EDITORS



In light of recent news, we wanted to use this space to talk about a topic that's a bit different than what we usually tackle here. Back in early July, Sony Santa Monica, the studio behind this fall's big PlayStation exclusive *God of War Ragnarök*, posted a brief message to its Twitter account, addressing a bit of community controversy.

In short, fans who had been eager to learn more about *Ragnarök*'s release had started harassing and insulting the game's developers on their personal social media accounts. Needless to say, that's not cool, and Sony Santa Monica was right to call it out. The studio noted correctly that passion for games "should not be toxic nor come at the expense of any human being's dignity."

While many of us who play games—we'd like to imagine it's the overwhelming majority—are respectful in our interactions with others, the truth is that gaming communities can and often do harbor some bad behavior. Sometimes that means being nasty to developers, as Sony Santa Monica employees experienced. But it can also take the form of being hostile to other players during online games, going beyond playful trash talk to something much crueler. It can mean making someone feel unwelcome in a community just because they're different.

It's important to remember that beneath every anonymous handle, behind every microphone and controller or keyboard, is a real human being. And not just that,

they're a real human being that shares your interests—after all, they're playing or talking about or working on a game you're passionate about.

Even if you're not part of the problem, it's also good to realize that you can be part of the solution. If you witness toxic behavior, it's within your power to do something about it. You might just tell the offender what they're doing is not okay, and maybe that will be enough to get them to realize they're out of line. But if that's not your style, many games and platforms now have built-in report functions, allowing you to anonymously flag offending accounts. If we all commit to making gaming communities better places for everyone, we can get there together—and then focus on the joy of gaming.

On that front, this issue offers plenty to be joyful about. Alongside all our regular features, we've got in-depth looks at some of the big games coming in the second half of this year, including *A Plague Tale: Requiem*, *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare II*, *Splatoon 3*, and *LEGO Brawls*. Hard to believe that's just the tip of the iceberg for what the rest of 2022 will bring.

To keep up with it all, be sure to continue reading *Walmart Gamecenter*, the magazine that keeps you at the center of all things gaming.

Josh Harmon and Mollie L Patterson

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Gamecenter
september 2022

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SQUARE ENIX ANNOUNCES NOT TWO, BUT THREE NEW FINAL FANTASY VII REMAKE GAMES

Square Enix recently revealed a ton of new information about its ongoing *Final Fantasy VII Remake* project, including the fact that the remake will be spun out into a trilogy, with a bonus game launching in the meantime.

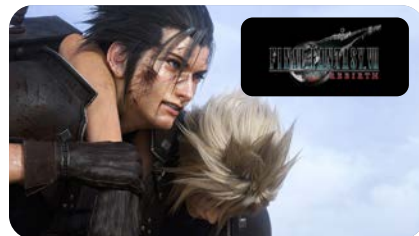
During its special *Final Fantasy VII* 25th Anniversary celebration stream, Square Enix revealed that the sequel to 2020's *Final Fantasy VII Remake* will be *Final Fantasy VII Rebirth*, and it's launching "next winter." Based on the trailer, it appears that *Rebirth* will continue to play with fans' expectations, especially when it comes to the original's biggest story beats.

Rebirth will launch exclusively for the PlayStation 5 at first, though we're sure that there will at least be a PC port, too. That means that, despite *Remake* starting on the PlayStation 4, there won't be a prior-gen version of *Rebirth*. But since Square Enix previously ported that game to the PS5 in the form of *FFVII Remake Intergrade*,

development on *Rebirth* "went smoothly," executive producer Yoshinori Kitase told Japanese gaming site *Dengeki*.

As for the scope of *Rebirth*, director Naoki Hamaguchi said that the sequel to *Remake* is "much more than just one installment in the series. We are developing it with all of the passion and dedication needed to create an original game and plan to deliver the ultimate gameplay and world-building experience."

Rebirth and the third game of the *Remake* trilogy weren't the only *Final Fantasy VII Remake*-related announcements that Square Enix made during the stream. A remake of *FFVII* prequel *Crisis Core* is also in the works, and that's launching even sooner than we expected. *Crisis Core: Final Fantasy VII Reunion* "enhances the graphics to HD and updates all of the 3D models in the game." Likewise, expect full voice acting and new music arrangements. It's landing on every major console this winter.



What's less certain about *Crisis Core Reunion* is whether it actually is a more straightforward remake than the rest of the publisher's recent *Final Fantasy VII* projects have been. After all, Zack Fair does make an unexpected cameo in *FFVII Remake*. On the other hand, since *Reunion* is coming to every major console, it would be weird if its story tied into a series that was a PlayStation console exclusive.

The future is exciting for *Final Fantasy* fans. To stay up to date on all things *Final Fantasy VII Remake* and beyond, visit Walmart.com or your local Walmart store.

2023

Year E3 and BlizzCon are set to return as in-person events

\$40,000

Amount a Japanese *F-Zero* fan paid to purchase enough Nintendo stock to ask the company for a new game in the series

20 Million

Number of players *Fall Guys* hit in first 48 hours after going free-to-play

111

Months Microsoft will have offered Xbox 360 games as part of its Games with Gold program when the last titles arrive in October

2,807

Pieces in The Mighty Bowser, the latest set in the LEGO Super Mario series

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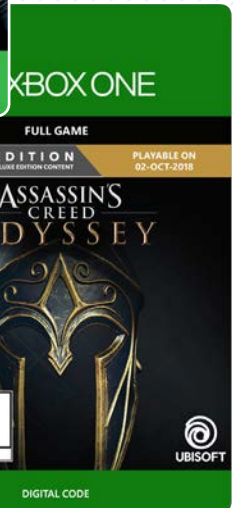
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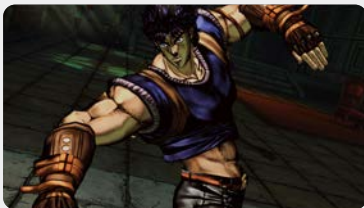


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release
calendar

AUG

23 **SAINTS ROW
DEEP SILVER** / XBOX SERIES X/S, PS5, XBOX
ONE, PS4, PC26 **SOUL HACKERS 2**
ATLUS / XBOX SERIES X/S, PS5, XBOX ONE,
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THQ NORDIC / XBOX SERIES X/S, PS5, PC

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ALL-STAR BATTLE R**
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WARNER BROS. / XBOX SERIES X/S, PS5, XBOX
ONE, PS4, PCGTA VI DEVELOPMENT RAMPING UP,
ROCKSTAR CONFIRMS

It's been nine years since the launch of *Grand Theft Auto V*, but developer Rockstar Games has offered fans a fresh reason to think the wait for a sequel may soon come to an end.

In a recent blog post, the company confirmed that it's ramping up its development efforts on *GTA VI* (if that's in fact the final title). "Over the past few years, we have been steadily moving more development resources towards the next entry in the *Grand Theft Auto* series—understanding more than ever the need to exceed players' expectations and for this next entry to be the best it can possibly be."

While Rockstar confirmed the next *GTA* was in "active development" back in February, the context of this new statement makes it clear development is progressing to a new phase. The *GTA* shoutout came as Rockstar announced future updates to *Red Dead Online* would be smaller in scope, and focused on content already in the



game. That signals work on *GTA VI* is far enough along to need the full attention of a whole lot of mission designers, cutscene animators, and gameplay programmers—the folks who would otherwise still be supporting *Red Dead Online*. Though the big reveal is likely still many months away, that milestone should give fans hope we're getting closer.

For now, you can pick up *GTA V* and *Red Dead Redemption 2* at Walmart.com or your local Walmart store.

*Image from Grand Theft Auto V

"BIG, BIG MAJORITY" OF DICE
STILL WORKING ON BF2042

Reports that only a "skeleton crew" remained working on *Battlefield 2042* are apparently not true, according to developer DICE's new general manager.

Rebecka Coutaz, who took over after longtime DICE GM Oskar Gabrielson departed in December 2021, recently told *Eurogamer* that the "big, big majority of DICE is working on *Battlefield 2042*." The statement appears to be a direct response to *Giant Bomb* reporter

Jeff Grubb, who originally circulated the report about a "skeleton crew."

Battlefield 2042 had a rough start when it launched in November 2021, suffering from a ton of bugs and connection issues, as well as a drought of new content as developer DICE got to work fixing the game.

Since then, however, *2042* has experienced a lot of positive changes. DICE has deployed a steady stream

of patches to address the game's most glaring issues, and the release of a new map, specialist, and weapons in Season 1 brought a lot of players back to the game. Season 2 is expected to launch in September.

For everything *Battlefield 2042*, visit Walmart.com or your local Walmart store.





OVERWATCH 2 DEBUTS JUNKER QUEEN, GOES FREE-TO-PLAY FOR EVERYONE

Overwatch 2 had a big Summer Game Fest, revealing a ton of new information during the Xbox + Bethesda showcase this past June.

The biggest news was that *Overwatch 2*'s multiplayer portion will launch in "early access" on October 4th for Xbox Series X/S, PlayStation 5, Switch, Xbox One, PlayStation 4, and PC. On top of that, its multiplayer will be free to play for everyone, not just players who already owned the original *Overwatch*, as was previously announced.

Given that *Overwatch 2* will already include all of the heroes and maps from the previous game, it might not be all that surprising to hear that, come October 4th, the original *Overwatch* will no longer be playable. That's according to director Aaron Keller, who noted on Reddit that *Overwatch 2* "will be a replacement for the current Live Service."

While some players might be disappointed to hear that, considering some of the returning characters will feature major reworks, it appears that Blizzard does not want to split the fanbase. Additionally, any

unopened loot boxes will be automatically opened, as *Overwatch 2* does not support that feature.

What it will support is the new character that Blizzard also revealed during the June showcase: the long-awaited Junker Queen. After teasing her for years, Blizzard is finally adding the character to the game as a close-quarters tank. She can buff her teammates, use her knife to pull enemies toward her, hit enemies with her ax to deal damage over time, and charge forward in a Rampage to prevent enemies from healing. That's all on top of her devastating Scattergun, which is a pump-action shotgun.

Junker Queen is one of two new characters revealed for *Overwatch 2* so far, with the other being the DPS-role-filling Sojourn. *Overwatch*'s former captain wields a unique railgun that can both rapid fire as well as shoot a powerful blast of stored energy. Her power slide also gives her new mobility options, and her Overclock ultimate auto-charges her railgun.

One thing that Blizzard didn't reveal was when *Overwatch 2*'s PvE portion will launch. We know that it will launch sometime in 2023, and that there will be seasonal updates to its story missions, but not much else beyond that.

What we do know is that the best way to stay updated on everything *Overwatch* is by checking out Walmart.com or your local Walmart store.



SAMUS ARAN HAS AN UNLIKELY ALLY—AND HIS NAME IS JOHN CENA

When Nintendo released *Metroid Dread* for Switch, it was the franchise's first 2D release in 19 years. But Samus Aran's return might've had help from a surprising source: WWE wrestler and *Peacemaker* star John Cena.

Per a recent report from wrestling fan and gaming personality Dan Ryckert, during a promotional photoshoot for the Switch back in 2017 Cena told the Nintendo staff present that he *really* wanted a new 2D *Metroid*. Some time after, Nintendo resurrected the long-simmering *Dread* project, handed it off to a new studio, and released it in 2021.



While there's no way of knowing if Cena's comments had any impact on Nintendo's decision to revisit *Metroid Dread*, you do have to wonder. Surely a request like that lands differently when the guy who's asking is 6'1" and 250lbs with four percent body fat. Plus, *Dread* introduced a cloaking ability for Samus that renders her invisible to enemies. If you ask us, that seems like an obvious nod to Cena's catchphrase, "You can't see me."

Just to be safe, we should get The Rock to petition Nintendo for new *F-Zero* and *EarthBound* games.

In the meantime, you can pick up *Metroid Dread* at Walmart.com or your local Walmart store.

1

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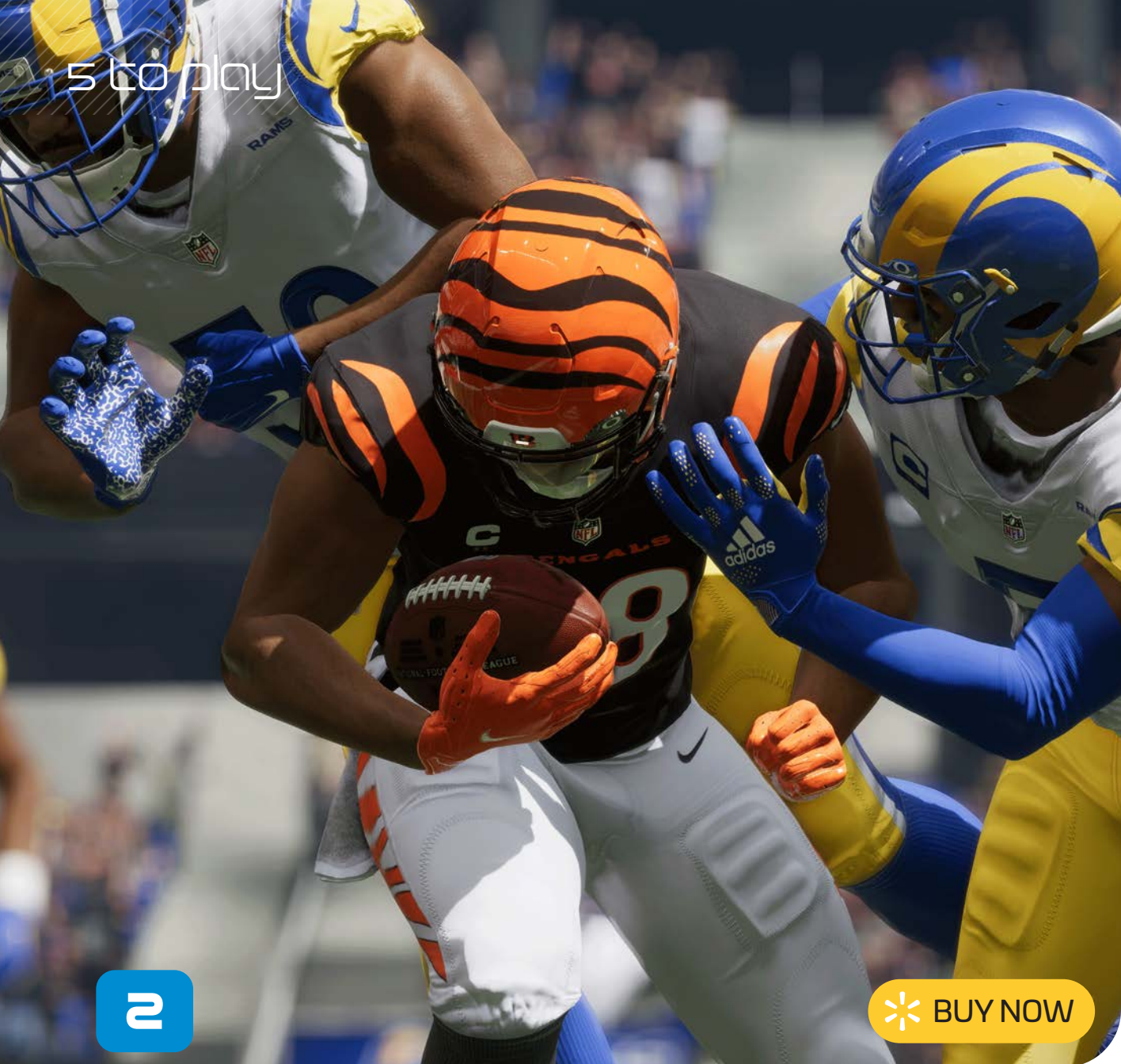
PUBLISHER DEEP SILVER / DEVELOPER DEEP SILVER VOLITION / PLATFORMS XBOX SERIES X/S, PS5, XBOX ONE, PS4, PC / RELEASE DATE 08.23.2022

"The *Saints Row* games are open-world sandboxes where you get to play as a criminal, and are known for humorous and fun situations, and thrilling sequences of action. We're keeping up that tradition in this latest installment. In fact, the biggest change we're making is giving players an all-new city to explore, Santo Ileso, while also bringing in a new cast of characters. These Saints are friends and roommates relying on each other to make their way in the world. There is a crime story, but it's one about coming up and being able to call your own shots alongside your friends. We want players to feel like a charismatic criminal [leader], and that's something *Saints Row* does very well. You can build your own slick criminal boss and battle rival factions or make your mark on the city by building criminal ventures."

ROB LOFTUS, EXECUTIVE PRODUCER, DEEP SILVER VOLITION

"We want players to feel like a charismatic criminal, and that's something *Saints Row* does very well."





MADDEN NFL 23

PUBLISHER EA SPORTS / DEVELOPER EA TIBURON / PLATFORMS XBOX SERIES X/S, PS5, XBOX ONE, PS4, PC / RELEASE DATE 08.19.2022

"We were so sad to lose Coach Madden last year. We visited him annually during football season to show him the game and get his feedback. In *Madden 23*, we celebrate him in a few different ways. The first game you'll play is a fantasy match of an All Madden AFC team vs. an All Madden NFC team, both coached by a version of John that represent two different eras of his historic coaching days. Then, at halftime, there's a short video celebrating his impact on the sport. As for the gameplay, *Madden 23* is led by our new system, FieldSENSE, which changes so much, from tackling to the ability to cut in any direction during runs, and our brand-new precision passing mechanic. We've also overhauled the Free Agency system in 'Franchise,' while our NFL player campaign mode, 'Face of the Franchise,' now offers five different positions: quarterback, running back, wide receiver, linebacker, and cornerback."

SEANN GRADY, EXECUTIVE PRODUCER, EA ORLANDO - TIBURON

"Madden 23 is led by our new system, FieldSENSE, which changes so much, from tackling to the ability to cut in any direction during runs, and our brand-new precision passing mechanic."



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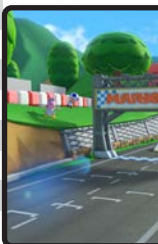
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 Full version of game required to use DLC. Sold separately.

Players who have not purchased the Mario Kart 8 Deluxe – Booster Course Pass and do not have an active Nintendo Switch Online* + Expansion Pack membership can play the additional courses included in the DLC if another player has the Mario Kart 8 Deluxe – Booster Course Pass and initiates multiplayer mode and course selection. Starting

March 22, 2022, courses included in the Mario Kart 8 Deluxe – Booster Course Pass will appear in the online course selection for Worldwide and Regional races.

*Any Nintendo Switch Online membership (sold separately) and Nintendo Account required for online features. A paid Nintendo Switch Online + Expansion Pack membership is required for free access to Mario Kart 8 Deluxe – Booster Course Pass. Not available in all countries. Internet access required for online features. Terms apply. [Nintendo.com/switch-online](https://nintendo.com/switch-online)
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Comic Mischief

5 to play



* PREORDER

THE LAST OF US PART I

PUBLISHER SONY / DEVELOPER NAUGHTY DOG / PLATFORMS PS5 / RELEASE DATE 09.02.2022

Nine years ago, the good people at Naughty Dog threw a monkey wrench into the post-apocalyptic zombie arena with *The Last of Us* by having the undeadening agent be a fungus that granted the infected victims echolocation to find your always-chewable neck. Remade for the second time, the newly dubbed *Part I* not only greatly upgrades the horrifying visuals and animations, but updates the controls to more modern standards, taking advantage of the PS5 DualSense controller's adaptive triggers and haptic feedback. *Part I* also adds a 3D audio option, as well as the prequel chapter *Left Behind*. Otherwise, though, it keeps the story and the gameplay faithful to the original—hence why you're still escorting a young girl named Ellie through an apocalyptic wasteland on the slim hope that she might be able to save the world.

The newly dubbed *Part I* not only greatly upgrades the horrifying visuals and animations, but updates the controls to more modern standards.



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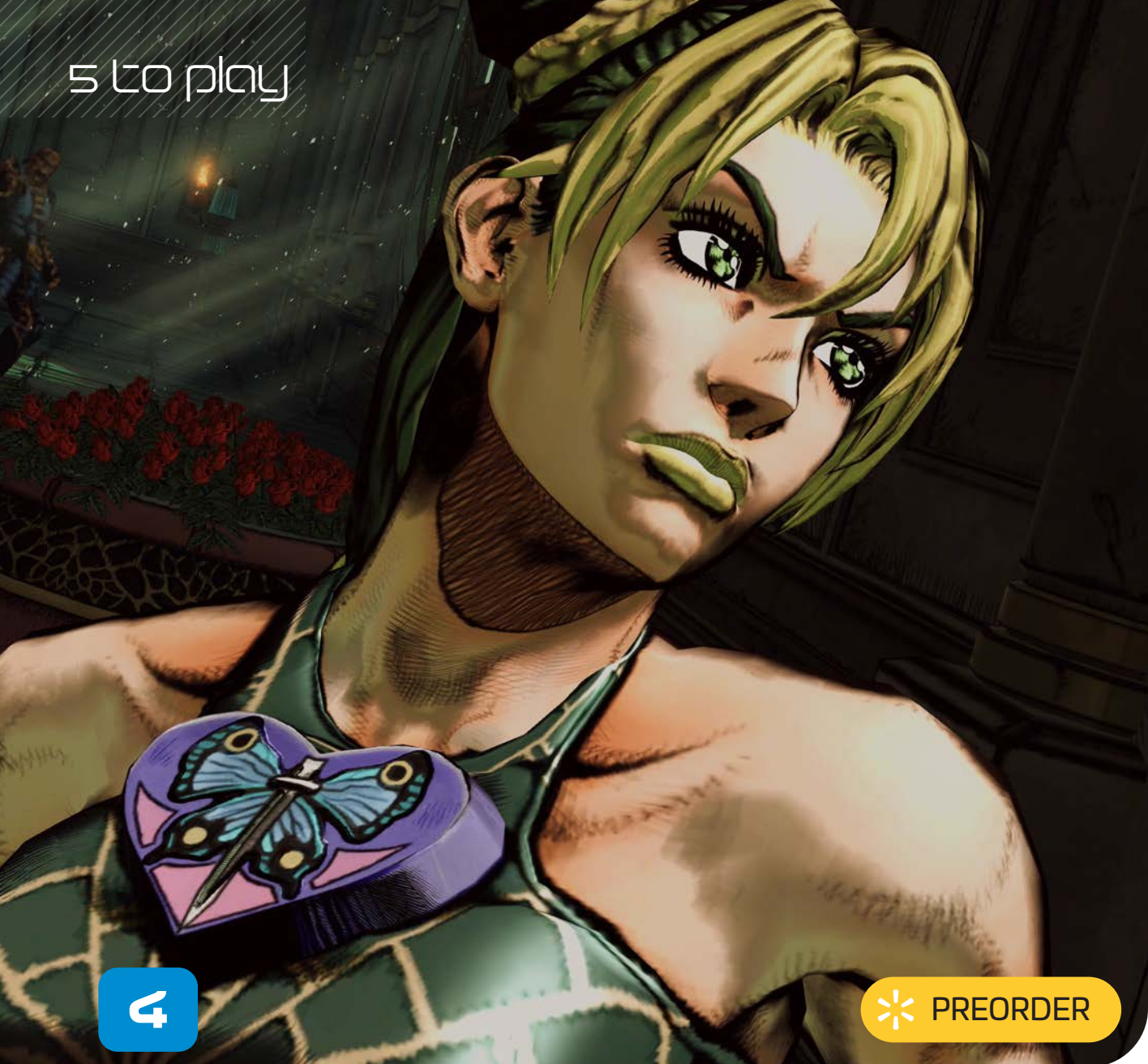
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5 to play



4

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JOJO'S BIZARRE ADVENTURE: ALL-STAR BATTLE R

PUBLISHER BANDAI NAMCO / DEVELOPER CYBERCONNECT2 / PLATFORMS XBOX SERIES X/S, PS5, SWITCH, XBOX ONE, PS4, PC / RELEASE DATE 09.02.2022

Inspired by Hirohiko Araki's iconic manga series, 2013's *JoJo's Bizarre Adventure: All-Star Battle* was a flashy, over-the-top 3D fighting game in which characters from the first eight story arcs fought in relevant locations. But this upgraded remake—being released to celebrate the manga's 35th anniversary and the anime adaptation's 10th—does more than just make everything look prettier. While the original boasted 32 characters (41 if you count the add-ons), *All-Star Battle R* pushes that number above 50, including F.F. (aka Foo Fighters), Jotaro Kujo, and Yukako Yamagishi, as well as some from CyberConnect2's follow-up, *Eyes of Heaven* (with, of course, even more coming later). Some of these characters have also been updated to look more like they do in the anime, and with the show's voice actors rerecording their dialogue. More importantly, the gameplay has been refined, adding jump dashes and hit stops, while also adjusting the fighting tempo.

This upgraded remake—
being released to
celebrate the manga's
35th anniversary and the
anime adaptation's 10th—
does more than just make
everything look prettier.



Xenoblade Chronicles 3



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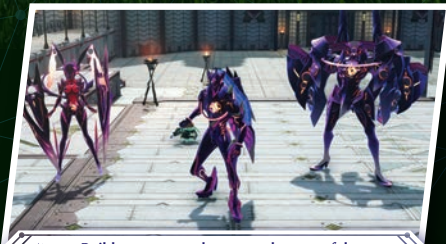
Xenoblade Chronicles 3
Expansion Pass includes access
to multiple waves of DLC
content as they
become available.*



Step into an epic, evocative story in a massive
world where the fate of nations is in your hands



Defeat enemies while seamlessly blending
RPG strategy and action combat



Build, manage, and command a powerful
team of characters to aid you on your quest



Violence
Mild Blood
Suggestive Themes
Language

*Full version of game required to use DLC.
Game, systems and DLC sold separately.
Nintendo Switch Lite plays all games that support handheld mode.

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Nintendo





5

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DESTROY ALL HUMANS! 2 - REPROBED

PUBLISHER THQ NORDIC / DEVELOPER BLACK FOREST GAMES / PLATFORMS XBOX SERIES X/S, PS5, PC / RELEASE DATE 08.30.2022

"*Destroy All Humans!* is a satirical action adventure series in which the player controls an evil alien named Crypto, who uses his high mobility, an arsenal of advanced alien weaponry, and powerful mental abilities to try and take over planet Earth. While the first game was about invading and conquering the U.S. in the late '50s, the second game—set in the swinging '60s—is about a secret, world-spanning plot by the KGB and another alien race. As for *Reprobed*, it's a faithful remake. We kept the original story and iconic voice acting, but polished the split-screen co-op and enhanced Crypto's abilities and weapons. For instance, it feels even more satisfying to use your telekinesis to slam a car into a tank and watch them both explode. We also made the Free Love ability a more active power that gives you a psychic beam which forces humans to dance and forget about Crypto."

STEFAN SCHMITZ, ASSISTANT CREATIVE DIRECTOR, BLACK FOREST GAMES

"We kept the original story and iconic voice acting, but polished the split-screen co-op and enhanced Crypto's abilities and weapons."

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A PLAGUE TALE: REQUIEM

BACK IN BLACK (PLAGUE)

BY MOLLIE L PATTERSON

Traipsing around a French countryside swarming with bloodthirsty English soldiers and tens of thousands of plague-ridden rats may not seem like a pleasant experience, but such a journey served as a major component of one of 2019's best video games. Released by Focus Entertainment and developer Asobo Studio, *A Plague Tale: Innocence* followed siblings Amicia and Hugo de Rune as they were forced to deal with the French

Inquisition, the encroaching Black Plague, and a mysterious illness that was ravaging Hugo's body.

Despite being a new IP from a studio not known for epic single-player experiences, *A Plague Tale: Innocence* became a critically acclaimed hit, praised for its beautiful visuals, rich storytelling, and impressive (yet unnerving) gameplay centered around avoiding swarms of rats. And, perhaps most surprising of all, it left us actually anticipating escort mis-

sions and stealth segments instead of fearing their arrival.

Thoughts of a second *Plague Tale* weren't really on the minds of the team when making the original. Kevin Choteau, game director at Asobo Studio, explained that everyone focused solely on making *Innocence* a success, and that they never even considered making a sequel. However, the team made one decision in particular that left the door open for telling more tales down the road.

FACT FILE

PUBLISHER
FOCUS
ENTERTAINMENT
DEVELOPER
ASOBO STUDIO
PLATFORMS
XBOX SERIES X/S,
PS5, PC
RELEASE DATE
10.18.22



While it now seems an obvious decision, thoughts of a second *Plague Tale* weren't really on the minds of the team when making the original.



THE FRENCH CONNECTION

For any developer crafting a project based around real locations or time periods, there's a fine balance to walk between honoring historical accuracy and building a world that will work for the needs of the game. For Asobo Studio, however, coming up with the France that we see in both *A Plague Tale: Innocence* and its sequel was especially important, given that the team is based out of Bordeaux.

Speaking to game director Kevin Choteau about the effort his studio put into recreating its home country, one example he brought up was working with Roxane Chila, a doctor in medieval history. Tapping into her knowledge of 14th century France helped craft a world that felt authentic to the time period and its people, while also finding ways to solve gameplay challenges that wouldn't feel out of place.

"There's a chapter where Amicia and Hugo are on the road, and we wanted to have them meet a group of people willing to help them. However, that's not something usual in our universe, and it is not easy to justify," Choteau offered up as one instance of such a situation. "After doing some research, we came to the idea of using the theme of pilgrims, and expose part of the history that concerns them [during the same timeframe]: their journey to Rome for the Jubilee of 1350."



"To capture the authenticity that is part of the DNA of *A Plague Tale*, we wanted an open ending, not the usual happy ending where everything is resolved," he said. "This gave us a good starting point to working on a sequel where we could freely explore the fate of our characters."

That sequel, of course, is *A Plague Tale: Requiem*. Choteau said everyone at Asobo was eager to work on this second chapter of the story, especially as it gives them the chance

to "revisit our entire gameplay and take on new challenges."

"We have spent considerable time studying the feedback given by both players and critics, to decide what we were going to do in *Requiem* and offer all possible improvements to the game beyond its story," he said.

Funnily enough, one of the biggest decisions to make when crafting a sequel to *A Plague Tale: Innocence* might not have been anything to do with new stealth options, improved

■ The pomp of the Jubilee of 1350 provides the backdrop for the game—and for some striking environments.



"We have spent considerable time studying the feedback given by both players and critics, to decide what we were going to do in *Requiem*."

KEVIN CHOTEAU, GAME DIRECTOR, ASOBO STUDIO

combat, or even next-gen rodent physics. Instead, it might have been deciding what to do with Amicia and Hugo. Despite the original game's open-ended denouement, figuring out where to take those two characters next couldn't have been easy.

When we last saw her, 15-year-old Amicia had been forced to deal with the horrors of the adult world very quickly, and while she'd grown more resourceful and capable, she had also potentially grown more bitter



RATS OFF TO YA!

While there are plenty of reasons to play *A Plague Tale: Innocence*, by far one of the game's most stand-out features is its massive rat swarms. They serve as an obstacle for progression, a key element to environmental puzzles, a major part of the overall hostile and oppressive atmosphere, and even, at times, a tool for taking out enemies.

So, it's not surprising to learn that the team at Asobo Studio is putting some big work into *A Plague Tale: Requiem*'s smallest stars.

"The rats have become much more evolved," explained game director Kevin Choteau. "They are now able to use their environment more efficiently to catch their prey, such as climbing over obstacles, or quickly avoiding areas of light to surprise the player."

According to Choteau, Amicia—and the players controlling her—will now have to face "huge, devastating tsunamis of rats," which can include up to 300,000 individual rats per screen (a major upgrade from *Innocence*'s limit of 5,000). And if that wasn't sounding warm and fuzzy enough, now even light won't keep you safe from some of those swarms—which Choteau playfully calls a "major novelty" of *Requiem*.

"We have developed a lot of new tools and technology to achieve this goal," he said. "I can't wait to see the reaction of the players!"



■ The improved visuals enabled by the latest consoles will make for some truly creepy, if impressively atmospheric, scenes.

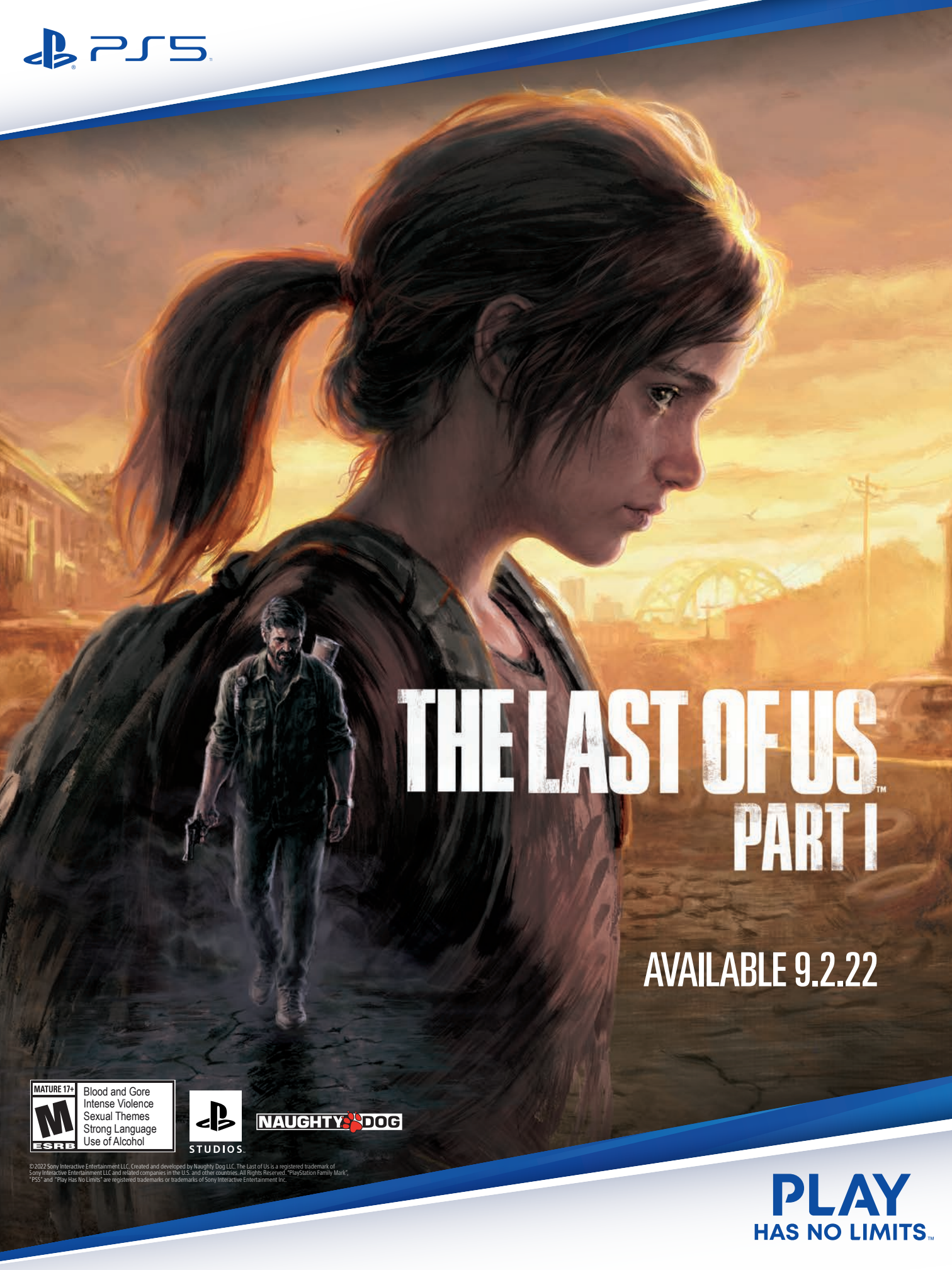
toward those who would do her and her brother harm. Meanwhile, Hugo was still very much a child at heart, but his connection to the world around him and the events that unfolded in the first game put him in a much different position should we ever meet him again. (We're avoiding spoilers here, but if you haven't beaten the first game yet, skip the gameplay-focused sidebar "More Ways to Tell the Tale" on page 30.)

So, when talking to Choteau about *A Plague Tale: Requiem*, we couldn't help but ask: How do you keep the pair vulnerable children and relatable to the player, while also making them more able to handle what might come next?

"It's a huge challenge," he admitted. "But for us, what makes it work is that Amicia and Hugo always kill when they have no other choice, to face threats and violence that are bigger than them. Once they've escaped, they take the time to talk and gather themselves, making us understand that everything has consequences, actions impact them, and they are only children facing a world infinitely more cruel than they will ever be."

"Amicia and Hugo always kill when they have no other choice, to face threats and violence that are bigger than them."

KEVIN CHOTEAU, GAME DIRECTOR, ASOBO STUDIO



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MORE WAYS TO TELL THE TALE

With as much as there is to say about *A Plague Tale: Innocence*'s narrative and cast, the game never forgot to be just that: a game. It offered a healthy balance of exploration, action, puzzles, and stealth, and developer Asobo Studio wants to build up those four pillars even more in *A Plague Tale: Requiem*.

"We've tried to keep that balance, that pacing, which greatly contributed to the success of *Innocence*," explained game director Kevin Choteau.

One of the areas players will definitely see some serious expansion in is Amicia's options for taking out threats. In addition to her trusty sling, she can now also wield a crossbow—putting her on more equal footing with foes such as armored soldiers—or craft new alchemical items. Even better, Hugo will now be a bigger factor during gameplay, as he can use the rat hordes to gain insight on enemies or even unleash them on foes that stand in the way.

Don't take all of the work going into *A Plague Tale: Requiem*'s combat to mean that you'll need to fight your way through every encounter, however. For those who prefer stealth—or a combination of the two methods—you'll still be able to approach encounters on your own terms.

"One of our goals with *Requiem* was to leave the player as free as possible in approaching a situation, and to accompany them whether they choose to go lethal or to go stealth," Choteau said. "All gameplay elements were thought of with this objective in mind."

While we've talked a lot about the story aspects of *A Plague Tale: Requiem*, the team at Asobo Studio is also putting a lot of work into improving and enhancing its various gameplay elements.

One of the ways in which *A Plague Tale: Requiem* will avoid advancing Amicia and Hugo too far down their path in life is that the game takes place a mere six months after the original. The siblings are together with their mother Béatrice

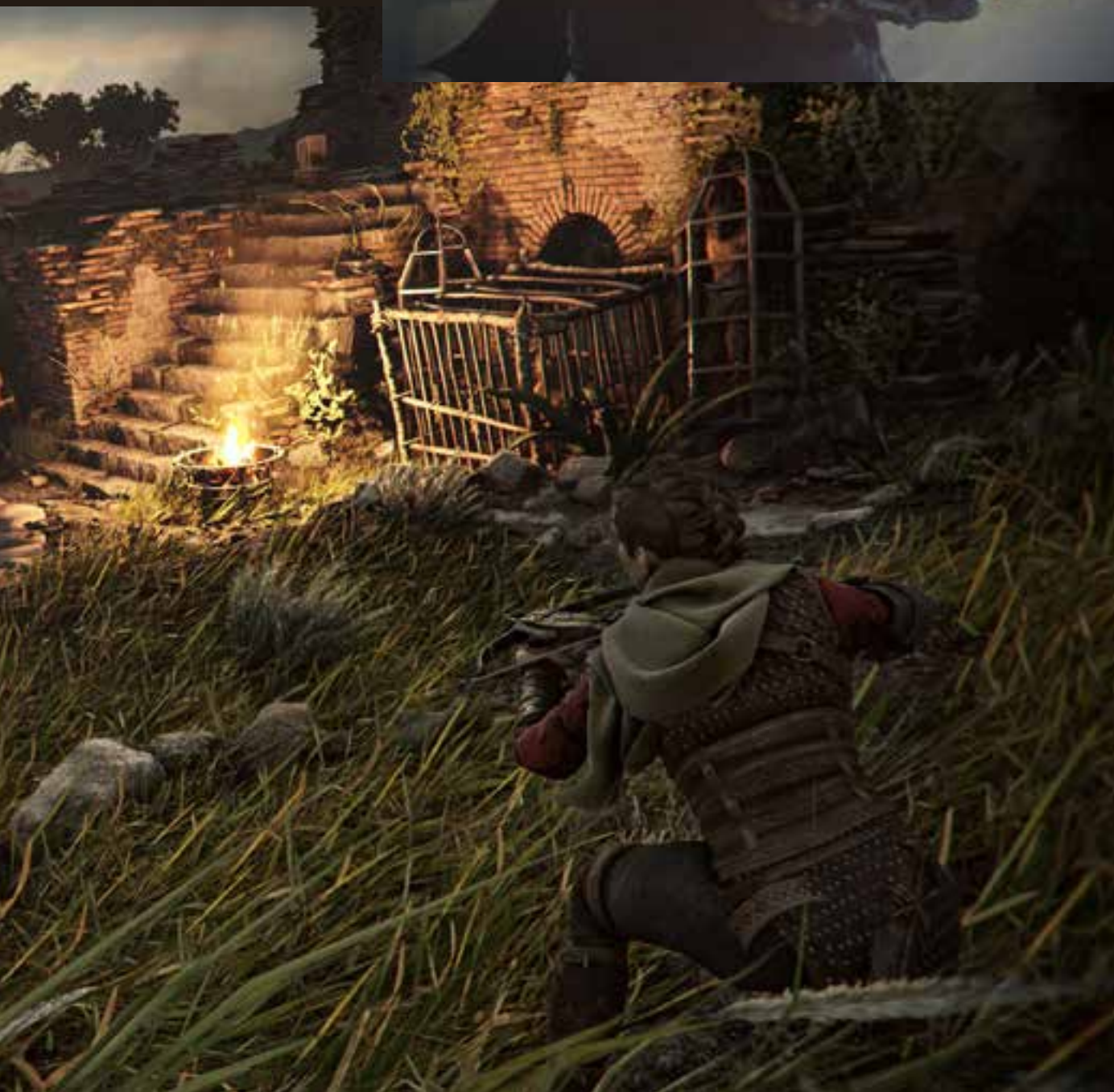
and the young alchemist Lucas (who we met in *Innocence*) as they follow some new leads on a cure for Hugo's illness while also trying to make a new life for themselves. However, this being a *Plague Tale* game, that journey surely won't

■ Stealth will still play a large factor in *Requiem*, even if you do have access to some more direct tactics.



be an easy one—especially as the fallout of Amicia and Hugo's defeat of the Grand Inquisitor hangs over their heads.

While we've talked a lot about the story aspects of *A Plague Tale: Requiem*, the team at Asobo Studio is also putting a lot of work into improving and enhancing its various gameplay elements, as you can read more about in the various sidebars that adorn these pages. Still, as





“We were thrilled with how players received *A Plague Tale: Innocence*, and even now—three years later—we still get a lot of feedback from players who were hooked by the story.”


KEVIN CHOTEAU, GAME DIRECTOR, ASOBO STUDIO

■ Hugo, and the peculiarities of his affliction, will once again serve as the center of the story.

much as we’re looking forward to seeing the advancement the team has made in those areas, it’s the core of *Requiem*—its characters and what awaits them—that has us most excited. It was the heart and soul of *A Plague Tale: Innocence* that made

it such an engrossing and compelling experience, and it’s that emotional base that promises to also make its sequel become something special.

And, thankfully, Asobo Studio is very well aware of that fact. “We were thrilled with how players

received *A Plague Tale: Innocence*, and even now—three years later—we still get a lot of feedback from players who were hooked by the story,” said Choteau. “It’s extremely exciting and stimulating for this sequel.” 



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* PREORDER

CALL OF DUTY: MODERN WARFARE

ONE FOR ALL, AND ALL FOR 141

BY MICHAEL GOROFF

FACT FILE

PUBLISHER
ACTIVISION
DEVELOPER
INFINITY WARD
PLATFORMS
XBOX SERIES X/S, PS5,
XBOX ONE, PS4, PC
RELEASE DATE
10.28.22

The 2019 reboot of *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare* kickstarted a new era for the long-running series, which had been getting a bit stale in the years prior. Not only did it reintroduce the world to fan-favorite characters like Captain Price, but it also introduced multiplayer features like Gunsmith

and modes like Ground War and Gun Fight, as well as the battle royale phenomenon known as *Warzone*.

All of this is to say that *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare II*, the sequel to the 2019 hit, launches this fall with a lot of expectations from fans, especially after the last two games in the series—*Black Ops Cold War* and last

year's *Vanguard*—seem to show the series falling back into old habits.

From what we've seen and heard, however, *Modern Warfare II* looks like it will take after its predecessor by setting a new standard with a heart-pounding campaign, memorable new multiplayer modes, and the next chapter of *Warzone*.

Modern Warfare II looks like it will take after its predecessor by setting a new standard with a heart-pounding campaign, memorable new multiplayer modes, and the next chapter of *Warzone*.

■ Seriously, does Task Force 141 not have the budget for some ponchos?



WARZONE 2.0

We've never heard of a battle royale game getting a sequel before, but that looks to be changing with the introduction of *Warzone 2.0*.

Developer Infinity Ward confirmed that, soon after *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare II* launches this fall, a "wholly new *Warzone* will launch as an extension of the *Modern Warfare II* universe." The developer promises that the new *Warzone* will bring with it "new technology, new features, and new gameplay that work seamlessly together."

Warzone 2.0 will run on the same engine as *Modern Warfare II*, which itself is an updated version of the engine that 2019's *Modern Warfare* introduced. It will introduce a new map and a new "sandbox mode" that's rumored to be extraction-based. What's strange is that it appears that the original *Warzone* will live on as a "separate experience that will include a continuation of player progression and inventories within that *Warzone* experience."

Modern Warfare II's campaign will pick up right where *Modern Warfare* left off. Captain Price leads this rebooted version of Task Force 141, and the beginning of the story finds them already several years into their tenures as the tough-as-nails, world-saving spec ops we know and love.

While we don't know the specifics, we do know that Task Force

141—including Soap, Gaz, and Ghost—will team up with Mexican special forces, specifically newcomer Alejandro Vargas. The one campaign mission we've seen involves Task Force 141 boarding an oil rig in the Gulf of Mexico, which happens to be housing a missile that's pointed straight at the U.S. Who's pointing that missile and why

Of course, *Call of Duty* is nothing without its multiplayer modes, and *Modern Warfare II* is looking to change things up.

■ Cartels? Terrorists? Russians? Whoever the game's main threat is, they clearly mean business.





is anyone's guess, though we're sure Russians are involved somehow. This is *Call of Duty* after all.

Of course, *Call of Duty* is nothing without its multiplayer modes, and *Modern Warfare II* is looking to change things up. Ground War is get-

ting an overhaul, with a bigger focus on vehicular gameplay. You can hang out of windows to shoot or even jump on top of moving cars, and you can repair your damaged vehicles at gas stations.

Two new modes also look to mix it

up. Knockout charges two teams with holding onto a device until time runs out, while Prisoner Rescue tasks one team with saving hostages from the other team. Developer Infinity Ward is also bringing back and expanding upon the now-iconic Gunsmith. [G](#)

■ Infinity Ward is really leaning hard into Ghost and his iconic skull mask in *Modern Warfare II*.

preview

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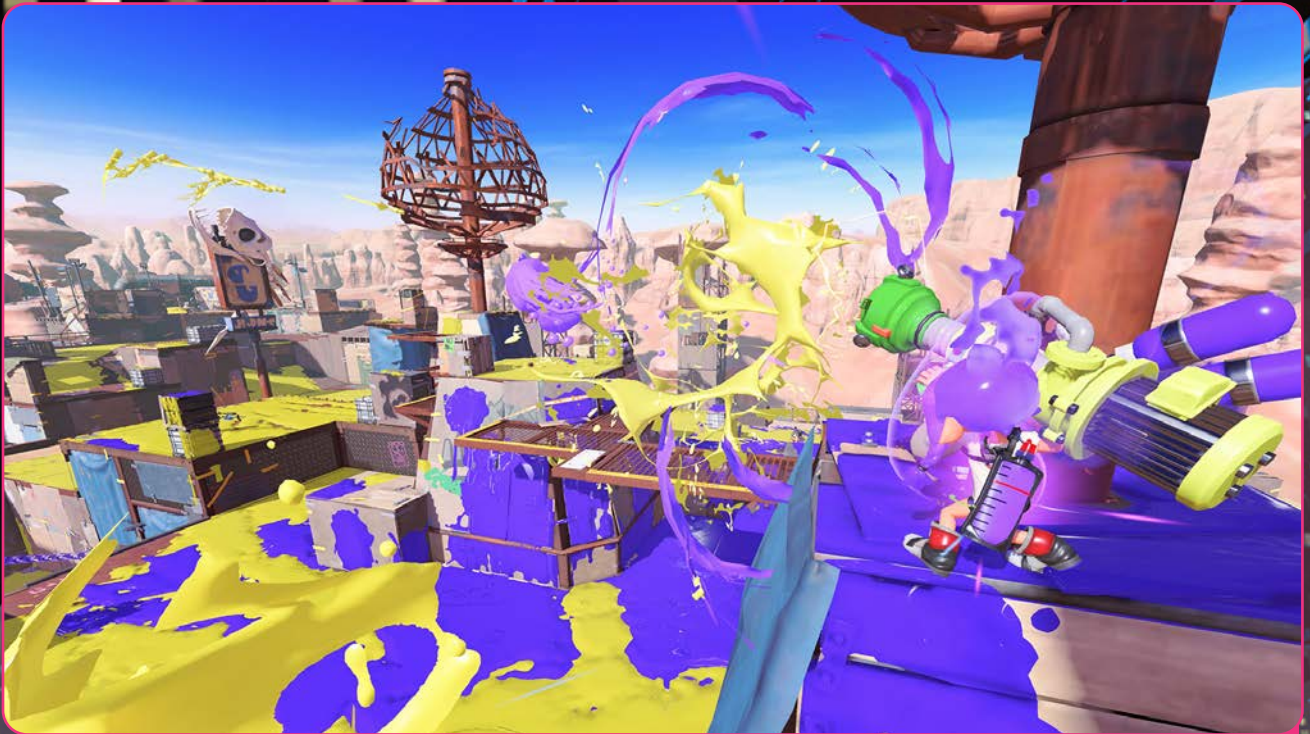
SPLATOON 3

THIRD TIME'S A SPLAT

BY MICHAEL GOROFF

FACT FILE

PUBLISHER
NINTENDO
DEVELOPER
NINTENDO
PLATFORMS
SWITCH
RELEASE DATE
09.09.22



■ Hats off to whoever has to clean up *Splatoon*'s arenas after each paint-spewing match.

The next entry in Nintendo's inky third-person shooter series is launching later this year, and things are about to get hairy.

As a series, *Splatoon* has always offered something that's not only unique to Nintendo platforms, but to gaming in general: a family-friendly, accessible yet deep multiplayer shooter. *Splatoon 3* looks to carry on that tradition, bringing back and expanding on many of the great modes,

weapons, and features that players loved about the first two games.

The series' signature multiplayer mode, Turf War, is still the main draw, but *Splatoon 3* is introducing a ton of new weapons and a host of new maps for both veterans and rookies to master. A completely new weapon type, Stringers, will introduce bows to the mix, and Nintendo has hinted that there will be different kinds of Stringers for different situations.

As a series, *Splatoon* has always offered something that's not only unique to Nintendo platforms, but to gaming in general: a family-friendly, accessible yet deep multiplayer shooter.



TRUE IDOLS

There's one thing we don't know about *Splatoon 3* yet, and it might be the most important question of all: Who will be *Splatoon 3*'s idols?

Both *Splatoon* games so far have given us a memorable pair of pop music idols to host the Inkopolis News, announce events like Splatfests, and inevitably become fan favorites. The first game introduced the world to Callie and Marie, collectively known as the Squid Sisters, while *Splatoon 2* gave us Off the Hook's Pearl and Marina.

We know that both the Squid Sisters and Off the Hook return in some capacity in *Splatoon 3*, as they've appeared in various trailers and music videos. But they won't be this game's idols, leaving the door open for two new characters to steal our hearts.

Since *Splatoon 2*'s Off the Hook gave us our first Inkling-Octoling team up, we'd love to see another twist on that formula. Maybe we could get our first Salmonid or, based on what we know about the campaign, Mammalian idol.



Tri-Stringers, for instance, will shoot three ink-filled capsules in one shot, making them a great tool for targeted area coverage.

Splatoon 3 will also debut a ton of new special weapons. If you're new to the series, the more ink a player lays down, the faster they will charge their special weapons, which

basically function like "supers" or "ultimates" in other games. *Splatoon 3*'s new special weapons include the Crab Tank, which is exactly what it sounds like, and the Zipcaster, which lets you thwip around the map like you're Spider-Man.

Salmon Run Next Wave, an expanded version of *Splatoon 2*'s co-op

■ When you set out on a Salmon Run co-op mission with your pals, you'll need to operate like a well-fish-oiled machine.





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■ The Salmonids have really nailed the “crazy eyes” look.

mode, will introduce several new boss Salmonids for players to take down while collecting Power Eggs for Grizzco Industries. Nintendo has named two of them—the Flip-Flopper and the Fish Stick—but there’s a third, mysterious, kaiju-sized Salmonid that we’ve only seen a glimpse of.

Ironically, one of the most exciting parts of *Splatoon 3* could be its single-player story campaign, called “Return of the Mammalians.” In the world of *Splatoon*, mammals (other than cat judges Judd and Li’l Judd)

long ago disappeared from the planet, leaving Inklings and Octarians to battle for territory. But in “Return of the Mammalians,” strange globs of hair called Fuzzy Ooze, and what look like Octarians wearing fur coats, have started popping up in the Splatlands. Where this story will take Agent 3 is anyone’s guess.

Splatoon 3 looks like it will offer something for everyone, whether you want to play cooperatively, competitively, or by yourself. A new story, new enemies, and plenty of new weapons and maps will make the next game in the series a must-play for Switch owners. 🎮





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Nintendo

preview

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LEGO BRAWLS

STUD ROUGHIN'

BY JOSH HARMON

FACT FILE

PUBLISHER
BANDAI NAMCO
DEVELOPER
RED GAMES
PLATFORMS
XBOX SERIES X/S, PS5,
SWITCH, XBOX ONE,
PS4, PC
RELEASE DATE
09.02.2022

Build 'em up, and knock 'em down. That's the name of the game in *LEGO Brawls*, a family-friendly fighter in which up to eight minifigs enter the arena and try to knock each other's blocks off.

Though you might hear "family-friendly fighter" and immediately think of *Super Smash Bros.*, *LEGO Brawls*' distinctive approach to gameplay makes it more than a copycat. There may be platforms and fighting, but this isn't a platform fighter in the vein of *Smash* or its recent competitors, *Nickelodeon All-Star Brawl* and

Though you might hear "family-friendly fighter" and immediately think of *Super Smash Bros.*, *LEGO Brawls*' distinctive approach to gameplay makes it more than a copycat.

MultiVersus. Rather than trying to knock people off the sides or bottom of the screen, you're doing damage directly to your opponents, whacking them until they run out of hit points and their minifigs fall apart.

And many of the game modes in *LEGO Brawls* offer something deeper than just knocking out opponents.

In Control Point, for example, there are two teams of four, who need to stand on and hold a specific area of the map. In Collect Mode, you need to run around getting as many items from throughout the level as possible and surviving to make sure you don't drop your haul. Even the Free-for-Brawl mode, which is focused on





MORE THAN MOBILE

If you heard *LEGO Brawls* got its start as a mobile game, that might give you pause. Maybe you're wondering if it's going to play ads in between every round, or ask you to pay real money for coins to recharge your energy, or something silly like that.

Rest assured, if you didn't know *LEGO Brawls* started on phones and tablets, you'd never suspect it. The stylized LEGO brick graphics look great on consoles, making good use of the added power. Moving and attacking feel great on a controller, too, in large part because developer Red Games already built controller support into the iOS version.

And you don't have anything to worry about on the monetization front, either. Everything in the game is available to unlock just by playing, so you won't have to spend a dime on microtransactions or battle passes, not even for cosmetics. In all honesty, that's a better deal than you get with some full-priced, triple-A console games these days.

eliminations, has a bit of a twist that sets it apart from what you might expect: You have a limited stock of lives, but if you deliver the finishing blow to another player, you'll regain some of your health, opening up a chance to play more strategically to survive.

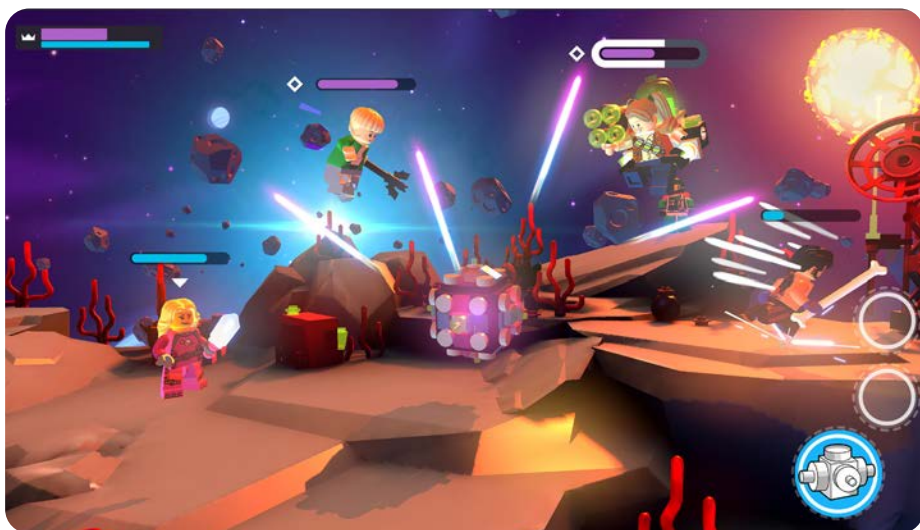
Still, *LEGO Brawls* does borrow one big idea from a beloved Nintendo franchise, but perhaps one you might not expect: *Mario Kart*. As you fight through matches in the game's arenas—which of course draw inspiration from a wide variety of LEGO themes from throughout history—you encounter floating, rainbow-colored bricks. Bust these open, and you'll be rewarded with a random power-up.

These will either tie into the level itself, like a UFO you can pilot around the Alien Conquest-themed stage, or can come from your equipped loadout. Much like a Blue Shell or Banana Peel in a *Mario Kart* race, these powerful items can give you the upper hand or help you stage a dramatic comeback.

Of course, the LEGO brand is all about building, and *LEGO Brawls* offers you a chance to get creative, too, by customizing your minifig brawler. You're able to mix and match heads, torsos, legs, and accessories from all the pieces you've unlocked to build a look that's truly you, and change it up whenever you see fit. To unlock new parts, all

Of course, the LEGO brand is all about building, and *LEGO Brawls* offers you a chance to get creative, too.





you have to do is play, and you can even pick a LEGO theme you want to work toward unlocking items from. Want to brawl as Owen Grady from *Jurassic World*? Just equip that theme, and all the studs you earn in matches will contribute to unlocking new dino goodies. All told, there are

more than 77 *trillion* customization possibilities using the parts that will be available at launch.

With that many options—and so many ways to play—*LEGO Brawls* looks like a great opportunity for you or the little ones in your life to get building and get brawling. ©

■ What's inside that power-up block? The only way to find out is to break it open.



GAME OF THE MONTH

CAPCOM FIGHTING COLLECTION

IN FIGHTING FORM

BY MOLLIE L PATTERSON

While Capcom will forever be known as the company that revolutionized fighting games with the *Street Fighter* series, the developer has crafted a long list of other entries in the genre over the years. As a nod to that history, we now get *Capcom Fighting Collection*, a new compilation of 10 vintage arcade ports that dig deep into Capcom's library of 2D fighters.

The first entry in the collection, *Hyper Street Fighter II: The Anniversary Edition*, is one of the lesser-known variants of the fighter that shook arcades to their core. *Hyper Street Fighter II* lets you field character variations from every single previous edition of *Street Fighter II*, resulting in a staggering number of heretofore unseen match-up possibilities. Cham-

pion Edition Guile vs. *Super Turbo* Akuma? Go for it, you masochist.

Potential character pairings are also the reason we get five different entries from the *Darkstalkers* series. While that may seem excessive, the higher animation levels of the characters meant that the entire

cast could never appear in the same game together due to hardware limitations. So, the two previously Japan-only entries we get here, *Vampire Hunter 2* and *Vampire Savior 2*, exist specifically to make some of those previously inaccessible rivalries come true.

FACT FILE

PUBLISHER
CAPCOM
DEVELOPER
CAPCOM
PLATFORMS
SWITCH, XBOX ONE,
PS4, PC
RELEASE DATE
06.24.2022





From there, *Capcom Fighting Collection* includes the giant mecha anime-inspired *Cyberbots: Fullmetal Madness*, the fantastic *Super Puzzle Fighter II Turbo*, its proper (though cute-ified) fighting game spin-off *Super Gem Fighter Mini Mix*, and—in its first-ever home appearance—the RPG-infused, story-focused fighter *Red Earth*.

Unlike *Street Fighter 30th Anniversary Collection*, every game included here is playable online. So far, thanks to the compilation's "rollback" netcode, nearly every match we've jumped into over the internet has felt smooth. Beyond the games themselves, *Capcom Fighting Collection* features a digital museum packed full of artwork and music. Some of what's included in that museum really dives deep into the history of these games and their development, offering a fascinating look at Capcom's legacy whether you're a new fan or old.



The strength of *Capcom Fighting Collection* is that it brings together 10 classic games that don't always get the attention that they deserve into one quality package.

The strength of *Capcom Fighting Collection* is that it brings together 10 classic games that don't always get the attention that they deserve into one quality package. However, that's also this release's weak point. If you're not into the more niche offerings of the fighting game genre, or if you've already loaded up on the

many re-releases of Capcom's most popular fighters, then this collection might simply not be for you. If you are someone who can appreciate fighting games of all shapes or sizes, or simply a fan of Capcom's classic 2D efforts, then you can't go wrong stepping into the ring with *Capcom Fighting Collection*. [E](#)

■ In *Red Earth*, you can fight a dinosaur as a buff lion man. What else do you need to know?





1 ON 1

JORDAN WOODWARD

HEAD OF DESIGN, REBELLION

The *Sniper Elite* series has quietly been setting the standard for stealth-action games for a while now. Although the first game was more traditional and linear in its scope, the World War II-set franchise has evolved into a mind-blowing mix of sandbox puzzle-solving, historical sci-fi, and gratuitously awesome action. *Sniper Elite 5* brings longtime protagonist, U.S. special ops sniper Karl Fairburne, to one of the most iconic settings for the conflict the series portrays: France. To find out more about Karl and the OSS's escapades fighting Nazis on the Western Front, we telegraphed an SOS to Rebellion Head of Design Jordan Woodward.

WGC: This is the fifth *Sniper Elite*. What did you want to change, and what did you want to keep from previous entries?

Jordan Woodward: We obviously wanted to keep the overall aesthetic and feel of the game. This is a tactical sniping experience, and we wanted to maintain those core principles of observe, plan, execute that we have always had in the series. Authenticity is also extremely important to us, and this goes for everything in the game from the locations and weapons to uniforms, vehicles, and incidentals you will find in the level.

We [also] wanted to offer the player choice wherever possible. Choice about the way they play, the routes they take through the map, the side missions they want to complete and also offer them the ability to change those mid-play.

WGC: How did you keep weapon customization in *Sniper Elite 5* believable to the era while also giving players enough options to make it interesting?

JW: We are fortunate enough to work with some incredible experts including Jonathan Ferguson and the team at the Royal Armouries, Combat Dealers, and the Imperial War Museum. That gives us access to so much knowledge and expertise as well as allowing us to get our hands on the actual weapons themselves. What we have found is that there was a huge amount of customization in the field. We saw some amazing examples of how weapons had been adapted to suit a particular soldier's requirement as well as iterated over time to fix or address an issue with a particular weapon.

WGC: What effort did the team put into ensuring that *Sniper Elite 5*'s maps felt authentic to their real-world inspirations in France?

Authenticity is also extremely important to us, and this goes for everything in the game from the locations and weapons to uniforms, vehicles, and incidentals you will find in the level.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

ZOMBIE ARMY 4: DEAD WAR,
SNIPER ELITE VR, SNIPER ELITE 4


JW: For *Sniper Elite 5* we switched over to photogrammetry for the creation of our in-game assets. We conducted a number of reference trips to various locations in France and the Channel Islands and captured tens of thousands of images and videos. These trips also enabled our design and art teams to get a real feel for the places that they are bringing into the game. It's those kinds of intangibles that you can only get when you are there in the location itself and they proved to be a great inspiration for all of us.

WGC: *Sniper Elite 5* has a surprising amount of variety when it comes to multiplayer. How did you balance the gameplay on that side of the game?

JW: On the multiplayer side, we created maps that were specifically designed and tailored for multiplayer, rather than reusing locations that were already available in the Campaign. We then introduced supply drops into these maps to encourage players to move about and explore rather than just hole up in one sniper's nest.

We also decided to separate the progression systems and skill trees for the campaign and multiplayer elements of the game as previously players who have finished the campaign started multiplayer with too much of an advantage.

WGC: If you could include any fictional weapon as a special unlock in the next *Sniper Elite* game, what would you pick and why?

JW: I'd still like to keep this in the realms of the feasible as authenticity is really important to us. During our research, we discovered plans for a powerful fast-acting aerosolized opiate, essentially knock-out gas, and it would be awesome to have something like that which could be loaded into a grenade launcher, enabling you to pacify everyone in a room. Maybe the player could tinker with the dosage as well to switch between lethal and nonlethal. 

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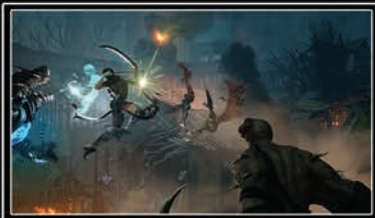
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